areas. Measures are being taken on a continuous basis to ensure that such activities and designs can be effectively contained. The measures taken include increased vigilance on the border/LOC, strengthening of security arrangements in the hinterland including increased and intensified involvement of the local police as well as the people of the area through Village Defence Committees etc.

Export of Onion by NAFED

*289. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the date and period for which the National Agriculture Federation (NAFED) suspended export of onion during each of the last three years;

(b) the reasons for suspending the export during the said period;

(c) whether the Government are aware that NAFED is not helping the onion growers in Maharashtra by purchasing onion at reasonable price during June-July, 1997 and the onion growers in Maharashtra have become restive due to falling of price and are resorting to agitation;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in issuing suitable instructions to NAFED to help the onion growers in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) During the last three years, NAFED suspended export of onion only from 20.10.94 to 3.11.94 due to shortage of onion in the country for domestic consumption and to arrest consequent rise in the prices. It helped the onion prices to stabilise at reasonable levels.

(c) to (e) Onion from Maharashtra is being procured by NAFED both for domestic as well as export requirements. The quantity of onion procured in Maharashtra during June and July, 1997 is given below:—

Month	Quantity	Average purchase rate per qtl.	Value
June, '97	499 MTs	Rs. 205.00	Rs. 10.27 lakhs
July, '97	1676 MTs	Rs. 179.00	Rs. 32.45 lakhs
	2175 MTs		Rs. 42.72 lakh

In addition, the Associate Shippers who are registered with NAFED for export of onions procured bulk of their export requirements from Maharashtra. These procurements have helped in stabilising the onion prices.

Excessive Use of Chemical and Fertilizers in Agriculture

*290. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the chemical fertilizers being used in agriculture on large scale are proving highly dangerous for human health;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the effective steps being taken by the Government to check the excess use of fertilizers in agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (c) Adverse effects on human health arising from the use of chemical fertilizers in agriculture are being still studied and so far no conclusion is arrived at. However, developed Nations are taking precautions in excessive use of high chemicals like urea etc.

(d) In general it cannot be said that the use of fertilizers in India is excessive. The consumption of fertiliser nutrients in India is about 75 kilograms per hectare against 243 kilograms in Egypt, 102 kilograms in Bangladesh, 351 kilograms in Japan and 259 kilograms per hectare in the Netherlands. However, the disproportionate use of high chemicals adversely affects the health.

[Translation]

New Public Distribution System in the States

*291. SHRI SHYAM LAL BANSHIWAL :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have launched the new Public Distribution System scheme recently;

(b) whether this system has been introduced in all the States;

(c) the names of States that have expressed their inability in implementing the new PDS scheme;

(d) the difficulties, if any, being faced by the Government in implementing this scheme;